



STATE OF CONNECTICUT **NEWS RELEASE**

ATTORNEY GENERAL RICHARD BLUMENTHAL

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
COMMISSIONER PATRICIA WILSON-COKER**

**CHIEF COURT ADMINISTRATOR
JOSEPH H. PELLEGRINO**

**STATE MARSHAL COMMISSION CHAIRMAN
DENNIS KERRIGAN AND EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR ROBERT RUDEWICZ**

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STATE SWEEP NETS ARRESTS OF 30 PARENTS WHO OWE MORE THAN \$1 MILLION IN CHILD SUPPORT

The Attorney General's Office, the Department of Social Services (DSS), the Judicial Branch and the State Marshal Commission this weekend conducted a joint sweep resulting in the arrests of 30 parents who owe a total of more than \$1 million in child support payments.

The sweep, carried out by 20 state marshals from Friday night through Sunday, targeted New Haven County parents who have ignored orders to appear in court for unpaid child support. Six parents were more than \$50,000 delinquent and 17 more than \$20,000.

"This sweep sends a stark and simple message: show up in court or you'll be picked up," Blumenthal said. "Whether they are dead broke or deadbeats, parents have an obligation to appear in court and to support their children. Arrests deter delinquency, while providing much-needed resources to children."

"Tough enforcement against nonpaying parents is vital – but only half the solution. We also need positive initiatives that reconnect absent parents with their children, strengthening emotional bonds and encouraging responsibility. Visitation rights deserve respect. If support orders need to be modified in light of lengthy unemployment, disability or other clear hardship, appearing in court is unavoidable, and defiance of court orders is unacceptable," Blumenthal added.

"Fortunately, most Connecticut children enjoy the love and support of both parents, even when the parents aren't together anymore," DSS Commissioner

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Patricia Wilson-Coker said. “Many fathers who aren’t in the household are still in their kids’ lives, contributing financially, emotionally and in many other ways. The problem is when non-custodial parents walk away from their responsibilities. A ‘capias round-up’ is an extreme measure, but it’s a reminder that the state of Connecticut will do everything possible to ensure that children get the financial support to which they are entitled.”

“We are pleased that, given the number of parents who evaded their responsibility to support their children, the state marshals have made a concerted effort to bring those recalcitrant parents before the court,” Chief Court Administrator Joseph H. Pellegrino said.

“The commission is grateful for the opportunity to participate in this important effort, particularly because it will have a direct impact on Connecticut families in need,” State Marshal Commission Chairman Dennis F. Kerrigan Jr. said. “The commission will continue to organize these sweeps across the state, without warning or advance notice. Thus, this should be a wake-up call to delinquent parents in other communities: Fulfill your support and court responsibilities, or risk the same fate as those caught by this weekend’s sweep.”

Robert Rudewicz, State Marshal Commission executive director, added that this was a collaborative effort and that he appreciated the cooperation from all marshals involved and the Judicial Branch, as well as the Department of Correction.

Parents arrested in the sweep were taken to Whalley Avenue Jail in New Haven. Those able to post bond were released and given dates for a contempt hearings. Arrestees unable to post bond will face contempt hearings Monday.

Judges in contempt hearings may take a variety of actions, including garnish wages, order lump sum payments or order parents to look for jobs. Judges may also jail parents found in contempt of court orders to pay support.

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